

# 2018/19 Challenge Cup Pool Draw

The Pool Draw for the 2018/19 Challenge Cup will take place in Lausanne, Switzerland on Wednesday, 20 June at **2.00pm** (UK and Irish time) before the draw for the Champions Cup.

The key principles and key steps integral to the Draw are explained below.

## Key principles

- The 20 clubs which have qualified on merit from the TOP 14, Gallagher Premiership Rugby, the Guinness PRO14, the PRO D2, the Greene King IPA Championship and from the Continental Shield will compete in the 2018/19 Challenge Cup in five pools of four.
- The clubs are divided into four tiers based on the qualification positions from their respective leagues, and on the Continental Shield. A draw will be carried out in advance of the pool draw proper to complete the tiers.
- Each of the five pools will include one club from each of the four tiers.
- Each pool will have at least one club from the TOP 14, the Premiership and the PRO14.
- There will be no more than two clubs from the same league in a pool.
- No pool will contain two PRO14 clubs from the same country.
- Clubs from the same league will be kept apart until the Tier 4 allocation.
- A club from the Continental Shield cannot be drawn into a pool which contains two TOP 14 clubs or two Premiership clubs.

## **Challenge Cup qualification**

*For the purposes of creating the tiers, the clubs are ranked based on their finishing positions in the TOP 14, Premiership, PRO14, PRO D2 and Championship leagues, or on qualification from the Continental Shield.*

<b>TOP 14</b>	<b>Gallagher Premiership Rugby</b>	<b>Guinness PRO14</b>	<b>Continental Shield</b>
<b>1 La Rochelle</b> <b>2 Pau</b> <b>3 ASM Clermont</b> <b>Auvergne</b> <b>4 Bordeaux-Bègles</b> <b>5 Agen</b> <b>6 Stade Français Paris</b> <b>7 Perpignan</b> <b>8 Grenoble</b>	<b>1 Sale Sharks</b> <b>2 Northampton Saints</b> <b>3 Harlequins</b> <b>4 Worcester Warriors</b> <b>5 Bristol Bears</b>	<b>1 Benetton Rugby</b> <b>2 Ospreys</b> <b>3 Connacht Rugby</b> <b>4 Zebre Rugby Club</b> <b>5 Dragons</b>	<b>Enisei-STM</b> <b>Timisoara Saracens</b>

### **Tier 1**

Tier 1 will include the **three** No 1 ranked clubs from the TOP 14, Premiership and the PRO14.

Tier 1 will also include **two** of the three second-ranked clubs from the TOP 14, Premiership and the PRO14. The two clubs will be decided by a draw in advance of the pool draw proper.

### **Tier 2**

Tier 2 will include the **three** clubs which are ranked third from the TOP 14, Premiership and the PRO14.

Tier 2 will also include the second-ranked club which was **not** drawn into Tier 1, and the club which is ranked **fourth** from the same league as the club which was **not** drawn into Tier 1.

### **Tier 3**

Tier 3 will include the **two** clubs ranked fourth which are not in Tier 2. Tier 3 will also include the **three** clubs which are ranked fifth from each league.

### **Tier 4**

Tier 4 will include the remaining clubs from the TOP 14 and the **two** clubs from the Continental Shield.

## **How the draw works**

Upon direction from the event MCs, Sarra Elgan (BT Sport) and Raphael Ibanez (France Télévisions), Dimitri Yachvili (beIN SPORTS) will draw the club balls and Austin Healey (BT Sport) will draw the pool balls.

### **Step 1**

For the purposes of the Pool Draw, all four Tiers must be established at this point.

A draw has to be made to establish the five Tier 1 clubs, and once Tier 1 is confirmed, Tiers 2, 3 and 4 fall into place as per the key principles above.

The draw now takes place to establish which **two** clubs from the three second-ranked clubs – Pau, Northampton Saints and the Ospreys – will join La Rochelle, Sale Sharks and Benetton Rugby in Tier 1.

The Pau, Northampton Saints and Ospreys balls are placed in the bowl, and two clubs are then drawn into Tier 1.

#### **Tier 1 clubs**

La Rochelle  
Sale Sharks  
Benetton Rugby  
**XXXXXXX**  
**XXXXXXX**

### **Step 2**

Once the Tier 1 clubs are established, the five Tier 2 clubs can be confirmed as follows: the three third-ranked clubs – ASM Clermont Auvergne, Harlequins and Connacht Rugby – will be joined by **XXXXXXX** who were not drawn into Tier 1, and by the fourth-ranked club from the same league as the club which was not drawn into Tier 1.

#### **Tier 2 clubs**

ASM Clermont Auvergne  
Harlequins  
Connacht Rugby  
**XXXXXXX**  
**XXXXXXX**

### **Step 3**

Once the Tier 2 clubs are established, the five Tier 3 clubs can be confirmed as follows: the two remaining fourth-ranked clubs, XXXXXX and XXXXX, and the three fifth-ranked clubs: Agen, Bristol Bears, Dragons

#### **Tier 3 clubs**

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

Agen

Bristol Bears

Dragons

The clubs in Tier 4 are therefore:

#### **Tier 4 clubs**

Stade Francais Paris

Perpignan

Grenoble

Enisei-STM

Timisoara Saracens

### **Step 4**

Each of the five Tier 1 clubs are drawn, followed by a pool number for each club.

### **Step 5**

Draw for the five Tier 2 clubs. As each club ball is selected, a draw is then made to allocate the club a pool from the available pools based on the key principles above. Some clubs may have to be placed directly into a pool in order to ensure the key principles apply.

### **Step 6**

Draw for the five Tier 3 clubs. Again, as each club ball is selected, a draw will then be made to allocate the club a pool from the available pools based on the key principles above. Some clubs may have to be placed directly into a pool in order to ensure the key principles apply.

### **Step 7**

Draw for the five Tier 4 clubs. Some clubs may have to be placed directly into a pool in order to ensure the key principles apply.